



# TWIN-H TIMES

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Hudson-Essex-Terraplane Club International

JULY 2020



**Watching how the water powered  
machine shop worked.**

## Wilder Ranch Tour

**By Richard Griffith**

We meandered past Half Moon Bay with our first stop at the old Pescadero Brewery where we were able to regroup and make our final push to Historic Wilder Ranch. This wonderful state park was once a very active dairy operation started in the 1890's, lasting into the late forties. There are two restored Victorian houses and various barns on the property with volunteer docents who explained daily life at this once busy dairy. The onsite interpretive center gives a great history of the coastal area going back to native Indians and the Spanish inhabitants who influenced life in early California.

Mary Griffith provided picnic basics for our core chapter enthusiast. We were able to spread out on the ranch's outdoor picnic tables in their wild flower garden. Really a great experience for all of us framed by an interesting historic window into California's past.

*More on page 4.*



**SPECIAL EDITION – WALT MORDENTI TRIBUTE (SEE INSERT PAGES)**



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# 2020

# HET Calendar of Events

## RED = EVENTS CANCELLED

**July 19**

**Don Frolich Memorial National Meet**  
Portal Park, Cupertino

**July 27-31**

**2020 HET International Meet,**  
'Vision Through Your Hudson Windshield,'  
Burlington, VT; see November/December  
WTN

**Sept. 26**

Ironstone Concours  
<http://www.ironstoneconcours.org/>

**PLEASE GO TO THE SITE TO FIND OUT  
ABOUT THEIR PLAN OF A DRIVING  
TOUR.**

**October**

All-Cal Meet at San Simeon

**December 12**

**Annual Business Mtg.  
& Holiday Potluck** at the Griffiths  
2140 Edgecourt Dr.  
Hillsborough, CA 94010

## Website Editor Needed!

*To post current tours and events.*

**This is an inactive site.**

**[www.norcalhet.com](http://www.norcalhet.com)**

*You can still find us on Facebook.*

Don't forget the **National Club Store** for  
all your Hudson related gifts!

**[www.hetclub.org](http://www.hetclub.org)**



## HET NORCAL PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

*Greetings to all Hudsons  
enthusiast & Northern  
California Chapter  
members,*

Well here we are in month number three of the corona virus which has changed our lives in unimageable ways. There are people all around us experiencing hardships and inconveniences that will be with all of us for a long time to come. Mary and I have turned off the evening news and are taking in the ever-changing daily events in small doses, avoiding the news casters deluge of hysteria. Between the crisis news there are wonderful stories of our first responders, medical communities' staff who are tirelessly coping with the epidemic and demonstrating the human spirit is alive and well.

The effort put forth by the pharmaceutical industry to create testing and vaccines is reported to be now on the scale of the United States industrialization in WWII. We, as Americans, should be very proud and thankful for the infrastructure of this country and our can-do spirit which no doubt will find the solution to this pandemic going forward. In the mean time we are trying to be respectful of our fellow citizens and are doing our best to implement social distancing and sheltering in place. There is some easing of the restrictions, although the automotive enthusiast calendar has been decimated for the summer months. Nearly every car event this summer has been cancelled, our International Meet in Vermont, Western Regional in Arizona and car week in Monterey including the Pebble Beach Concours; if we are creative, we may be able to pull a few events out of the preverbal hat.

We suggest a social distancing driving tour back in the delta area. Perhaps our clever members the Bailey brothers could create a tour with rest stops and we can self-supply picnicks as a "drive in place" car event. This might create an alternative to the canceled

friendship day and Portal Park events that were on our previous local calendar. We have a little time to work on an event like this and would welcome any input and suggestions via email. Ed Drexler and I are working on a possible North South meet in October; pandemic willing! And the Ironstone Concours Committee will be making a decision on June 1 as to whether or not that even will go forward. More news as this develops.

The good news is, sheltering in place includes the garage! Our 39 Hudson Country Club Eight is now breathing much healthier with a restored carburetor complements of Al Saffrahn. The starter switch was also acting up, causing some apprehension. However, a process of testing all the related components the culprit was revealed and it has been repaired. As we all know old cars have their quirks and require lots of attention.

I heard from Jerry Griffin that he and Jeff Nielsen picked up Jerry's 1951 Hornet's (fondly referred to as Gertrude) new engine from the machine shop in Salinas. Jeff will be reinstalling it the near future. Blake Weston was the connection to the engine. It's great to see our club members helping each other out. Getting Gertrude back on the road will be very exciting news indeed!

Let's all try and help with these projects in any way possible through parts location or expertise. There is a lot of talent in the club and some times a little support goes a long way. I have asked before to be briefed on what you are working on so as to get assistance directed your way. Driving your Hudson is the best way to enjoy our club and each other, so keep the faith in these trying times.

Richard Griffith

### **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**BILL DIPPEL - YUBA CITY**

**DIANE LEVINE - ROHNERT PARK**

They are both sporting 55 custom Hornet sedans  
in matching red and white.



**Wilder Ranch Continued...**Our first planned tour for the new year was a drive down the "Highway by the Sea...Bound to romantic legions of early California". We think a tour even more satisfying behind the wheel of a Hudson for sure.



Left: The Wilder Homestead – an amazing tour.



Right: Lunch in front of the old adobe built by the Wilder family.

Greetings,

I wanted to give everyone an update on Walt. He is starting to slow down and is having trouble hearing, so he doesn't hear the phone when it rings and cannot talk on the phone.

I had his hearing aid cleaned (lots of wax), but we cannot take him to medical clinic to get his ears cleaned because of travel restrictions in SF for non-medical emergencies. Walt is enjoying Margaret's roses in full bloom, which we make into bouquets for the house with some of Margaret's lavender. He really appreciated the fragrant bouquet of roses from Jeanene and Jeff's garden. And he is still enjoying his glass on red wine with dinner. Walt is not reading his email regularly, and he is sleeping a lot. I wanted to suggest that it might be best to reach him with cards that I can read to him and that he can hold and place around the house.

Walt Mordenti 45 Skyview Way  
San Francisco, CA 94131

Warm regards, Joyce

## Walt's #78 Midget Racer 1955

*Found this gem with nice introductory letter, classic pictures of Walt's Midget wining a race, and the newspaper write up that I wanted to share with you.*

The last midget race at Candlelight Stadium in Bridgeport Ct. on May 1, 1955. Roger Bailey in the #78 was the eventual winner.

I saw my first race ever at Candlelight in 1947 the night "Jeep" Colkitt was killed.

**Joe Saleem photos.**



## A DERHAM BUILT HUDSON – PART ONE

Kevin Hickling – NSW Australia



One of the highlights for me was viewing that beautiful 49 Hudson Derham of the Souer's family to the point that on my return to Sydney my first thought was to find a right hand drive 49 Hudson and build one. After many months I located one in Melbourne, Victoria. Many thanks to my Hudson friend, Steve Conyers; Steve found a good virtually rust-free 49 Hudson in central Victoria that had been garaged for many years.

This is a replica of one of three Derham bodied Hudson limousines built by Derham Coach Builders in Pennsylvania for the Hudson Motor Car Company. The original 1949 vehicle was commissioned by Inez Tiedman Chapin, the widow of Roy D. Chapin, founder of the Hudson Motor Car Company of Detroit and Secretary of Commerce, serving under President Hoover. It was used to chauffeur Mrs Chapin on regular outings. The original 1949 Hudson Derham has been in an Art Museum in California and is now owned by a private family. This replica has been built as a tribute to the craftsmanship of the original.

This is an original right-hand drive vehicle imported into Australia in 1949 and was used in the development of the Derham from original drawings.

The first job was to totally strip the Hudson as the car we found was a Super 6 so a lot of work had to be done on the body - mainly the back half. The two rear doors were removed and altered on the top rear sections, then the roof was modified to get the smooth half-moon shape, then we added the extra drip gutter to follow down the roof line to the top of the rear guards. I then cut out the rear window from an old 1937 Hudson sedan that was a parts car and cut and shut the two halves to give us the small window.

The next step was to cut out a larger section of the roof from the 37 Hudson as shown and welded the small window into the larger section. That complete welded piece was then sat onto the 49 back window section and marked. I then cut out that large piece from the stepdown and welded it into place. Once that was completed I then removed the rear quarter windows and that profile was mapped onto a metal sheet and two quarter window blank metal sections were welded into place. The start of the custom body shape of the Derham is now taking shape.

**MORE NEXT ISSUE.....**



### **Treasurers Report from Chris Bailey – May 2020**

Just like all of you; not much extra curricular activities or spending these virus days. The NorCal Chapter only issued two checks this year including newsletter expenses and the National Meet advertisement. Our balance is healthy and positive.

I have received four 2020 dues checks so far as our multi-year dues holiday is over. Remember the Board authorized \$15 annual dues payable by July 1st at the last December Business meeting. Make checks out to NorCal HET and send to Membership Chair, Mary Griffith, so she can maintain our Club database.

If you should have any questions, please contact me, as listed on the Board of Directors column in the newsletter.

**HET 2020 Vision  
“ FIGHT BACK COVID 19 ”  
PHOTO COLLAGE PROJECT!**



Our photo collage will be published in the WTN and the Hudson Triangle.

We are also looking for donations of \$20.20 or more to assist the Historical Society in offsetting the income normally raised at the annual HETHS Auction.

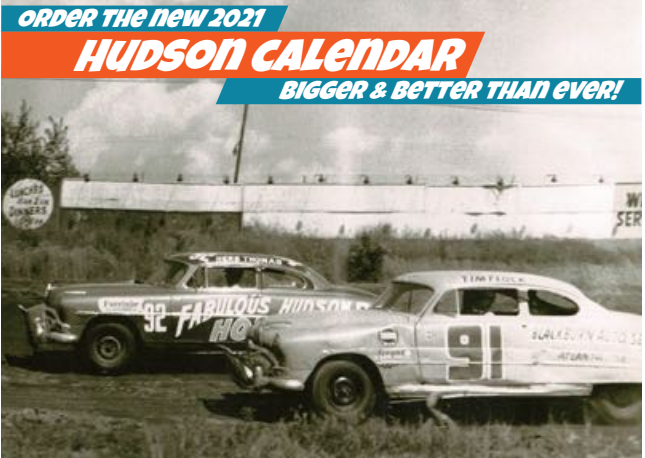
**Send your photos to:**  
[margritpoynter@gmail.com](mailto:margritpoynter@gmail.com)

**DEADLINE FOR PHOTOS IS JULY 15**

**Send your donations to:**

Cheri Holz  
13270 McKanna Road  
Minooka, IL 60447  
Thank you!

*Stay strong and Hudson on!*



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## Club Member Frank Zebley needs your help.

I got this Hudson problem. My '52 Hornet 308 engine has an unrepairable crack in the block, I tried to fix it but didn't work. So I need an engine. Do you have an extra one in the garage that you want to get rid of? ha ha--I had to ask. So maybe you or one of the NorCal. Hudson members might have a lead on an engine for me. I would like a complete engine that is repairable or a good block that I can rebuild. Please keep me in mind. I would appreciate any help. Thanks, Frank

### Call Alan to See if these are Still Available...

\* Lower rocker trim from a couple long wheel base stepdows 50 51 may fit others - **\$250.00**

**Call Alan Pryor 510-521-5025**

A LEAD FROM DIANE LEVINE... 50 Hudsons and a variety of parts. He is located in Nebraska. The property is being sold, so time is short for availability. He mentioned that the scrapper will be hauling off anything not sold (makes me sad). He has been looking for parts for me. Ron, and gave me permission to give out his email address [rcfalk@megavision.com](mailto:rcfalk@megavision.com)



### More on our Newest Member...

I bought a '55 Hornet Custom, so it is an Orphan car. I hope your group encompasses them too.

Yes, she's a girl, and I am learning as much as I can about her. Lots of fun, and challenges on making her correct...I'd love to get face-to-face, or car-to-car, with folks.

I also have a small business at car shows selling car themed items. As it turns out, the car matches my logo. So, I get extra space and have her next to me.

I look forward to getting to meet the group sometime soon.

Warm regards, Diane Levine



## LOOKIN' GOOD!

Jerry Griffin and Gertrude at the Golden Gate Bridge 75th Anniversary Car Show at Crissy Field May 26, 2012.

Hope to see them back on the road soon

Jeanene Denegri  
HET Newsletter Editor  
949 Cherry Street  
San Carlos, CA 94070

**MEMBERSHIP DRIVE  
PLEASE SEND IN  
BELOW FORM  
BY JULY 1, 2020.**

*Send me  
in!*



## **Join the Northern California Chapter of the HET Club**

Dues: \$15/year, or Free for one year, if you are a new member. Mail form and dues to:  
“NorCal HET Club”, Mary Griffith, 2140 Edgecourt Drive, Hillsborough, CA 94010

Join today and get...Tech Support, Newsletters, Leads on Parts & Attend Local Meets!

*What a great way to keep Hudson's' on the road!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address (mailing) \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email\* \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Required if you have one.*

Type of Car: Year/Make/Model \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Hudson  
ownership *not* required.

Note: Membership in the National HET Club ***is required*** for membership in the NorCal HET.  
Dues for **National Club** are \$35/yr. regular mail, or \$45/yr. 1<sup>st</sup> class. To register online go to:  
[www.hetclub.org](http://www.hetclub.org) or contact: The HET Club, 7115 Franklin Ave, Windsor Heights, IA 50324.



# WALT MORDENTI -

## *Thank You for all Your Effort and*

Walt's (left below)  
1934 Terraplane



Walt was also involved with auto racing. He earned a reputation in the 30s, 40s, and 50s as a master with Hudson blocks, and built them into high performance engines for tracks throughout New England, PA, NJ, and NY. In February 1956, he set the fastest time in Daytona Beach in a Ford V8-60 midget (118.421 mph). In 1958, he won the Ford championship with ARDC.

Walter was born on July 26, 1921 in MA. His family moved to Waterbury, CT where his father Ettore was an automotive mechanic at the Moody-Wilcox Hudson Motor Car Company. The service manager, Ray Hayden, fixed cars at night in his backyard; in 1934, he offered 13-year-old Walt an opportunity to work with him after school. In 1937, Walt quit school and began working fulltime at Moody's to help support his family.

Walt worked at Moody's until he was drafted into the Army Air Forces in 1942. He was stationed in England and served in the 8th Airforce Air Corps. Walt was a Master Mechanic and Aircraft Carburetion and Ignition Expert. When Walt was discharged from the Army, he returned home and married Margaret on September 15, 1945. They had 3 children: Stephen, Joyce, and Margaret, who died at 3 months.

Walt had many automotive roles that included specialization with Hudsons. He opened his first gas station in Waterbury, CT., servicing all cars and trucks, but he was always a Hudson-man at heart. He built a 4-stall repair garage with a lift and a pit in Waterbury, Mordenti's Auto Sales and General Repairing, where he repaired Hudsons, AMC, and Brand-X.

He sold the midget in 1964 to send his son to college, but in 1968 he was back into racing—only this time behind the wheel! He was owner, mechanic, pit crew, and driver, and he raced every Saturday night on the 1/2-mile dirt track in Lebanon Valley, NY. In 1969, he was Rookie of the year; in 1970, he was recognized as the most improved driver. In 1978, he retired from racing and moved to Winter Haven, FL, but he didn't retire from automotive repairs! He worked for Lee Ragatz, Jr. at his dealership until 1994, when he and Margaret moved to San Francisco to live near Joyce.

Walt and Margaret were dedicated Hudson folks. In 1987, Joyce bought a '53 Hornet Sedan for Walt to restore as a pre-retirement project. When he finished her car, he drove it from San Francisco to the Hudson National in Waterbury, CT via Florida!



Fearing that her father might not return her car, Joyce bought Walt a '53 Hornet Coupe from Bill Albright to keep him occupied. Walt's Masterpiece, his 1953 Hornet Coupe, needed everything. Walt rebuilt everything: he added A/C, power steering (rack and pinion, custom brackets...no cutting the frame which Walt calls "power steering by Walt"), 2.73 ring and pinion in the stock Dana 44, and numerous other goodies to

provide for better cooling, oil filtering, enhanced fuel delivery, hotter reliable spark with AMC distributor and electronic ignition, a heavy duty Ford 12v starter especially machined to fit the Hudson bell housing, massive sway bar, cruise control, enhanced gauges and tachometer, working clock, under front end



# A TRUE HUDSON LEGEND

## *Contributions to Keeping Hudsons on the Road!*



cooling air scoop, halogen headlights, etc. A famous work of automotive art, it could possibly be the most widely known Hudson in the country.

When his car came off the lift and the paint was dry, Walt and Margaret were off again, driving from sea to sea in his '53. They so enjoyed their numerous road trips in these Hudsons.

Together, they attended nearly 30 National Meets—at least 17 in his beautiful '53 Coupe—and regularly won the long distance award. Their travels covered 150,000 miles of adventure, crossing the country 19 times, visiting 48 States and 5 Provinces of Canada. Walt loved to drive fast and consistently took the '53 up to 80 mph, and even exceeded 100 mph once!

Margaret kept a journal to record their trips, which captured their experiences and included comments about how the car was performing, the weather, the changing scenery, traffic stops, delays due to crowds admiring the '53, anticipation of eating something special at a favorite diner, etc. Walt's faithful navigator and co-pilot was always at his side. They were married 72 years before Margaret passed away in 2017 at 94.

**Walt is unique among HET members. He lived in the Hudson era, worked on them when they were new, wrenched and raced them, restored them, and drove the wheels off them.**



Walt became active in the Hudson Club when he moved to San Francisco. He rebuilt carburetors in his garage, and he designed, hand fabricated, and sold oil filter kits and thermostat housing block off plates, which he advertised in the WTN.

*Walt shared his expert knowledge with our Club with his WTN column "Walt's Garage" for over 15 years, and he provided HET advice, support, and encouragement by email and phone daily 'til 10 pm PST. He believed that Hudsons were to be driven and enjoyed, not showpieces. He never hoarded parts, and always got parts to folks who needed them. That was his mission for the automobiles he loved. Walt, the HET community takes pause to honor a true Hudson Legend!*



-Copy and photos provided by Carl Germain and Joyce Mordenti